

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-8 and 10-16 remain in the application. Claims 17-20 were canceled in the response to the first Office Action. Dependent claim 9 now has been canceled. Claim 4 has been amended into independent form, with all the limitations of original claim 1. Claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of canceled claim 9. Claim 1 has been amended to correct a typographical mistake.

The applicant and the assignee are pleased to note that the Examiner has identified claims 5-7 and 10-16 as being allowed. Those claims remain in the application and have not been amended.

The applicant and the assignee also are pleased to note that the Examiner considers claims 4 and 9 to be directed to patentable subject matter. Patentable claim 4 had depended directly from claim 1. Claim 4 has been amended into independent form with all of the limitations of claim 1. Hence, amended claim 4 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Patentable claim 9 had depended from claim 8. Claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 9. Hence, claim 8 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Ichio et al. The Examiner identified elements of the Ichio et al. reference that were considered by the Examiner to correspond to the subject matter of original claims 1-3. In this regard, the Examiner considered the portion in FIG. 15 of Ichio et al. immediately to the right of the end of the lead line from the reference number 13a to be the bite-in portion.

The rejection of claims 1-3 in view of Ichio et al. is traversed with respect.

The Examiner will appreciate that the Ichio et al. reference is assigned to the assignee of the subject application and was prosecuted by the undersigned attorney for the assignee. Hence, the applicant and the undersigned attorney are very familiar with the teaching of Ichio et al.

The portion of Ichio et al. that the Examiner compares to the bite-in portion is part of the component identified by the reference numeral 51 in FIG. 15. In this regard, the Ichio et al. reference relates to a waterproof connector with a sealing member. The sealing member of Ichio et al. includes a housing-side sealing member 50 and the cover-side sealing member 51 that is specifically mentioned in the Office Action. The Ichio et al. reference explains very clearly that these sealing members 50 and 51 "are made of gel or jelly-like material." The housing-side sealing member 50 is assembled into the rear end of the housing, and the cover-side sealing member 51 is assembled into the cover. The cover is pressed against the housing during the final stages of the connector assembly. As a result, the "cover-side sealing member 51 then spreads," and "the gap between the respective electric wires 45 and both opening edge portions 20, 34 are filled with the housing-side sealing member 50 and the cover-side sealing member 51 along the entire circumference of the opening edge portions 20, 34."

Accordingly, the Ichio et al. connector is configured so that the wires cause the jelly-like sealing members to deform and surround the wires to achieve sealing around the wires and between the wires and both the housing and the cover. The Ichio et al. connector simply would not work if the sealing member were formed integrally with the cover. Such a hypothetical reconstruction would require either the cover to be formed from a jelly-like material or would require the sealing member to be

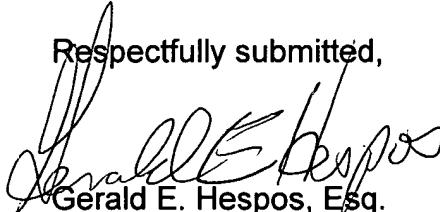
formed from the rigid synthetic resin of the cover. A jelly-like cover would be structurally ineffective and could not hold the jelly-like sealing member in place to achieve the waterproofing of the housing. On the other hand, a more rigid sealing material would not achieve waterproofing around the wires and between the wires and the more rigid cover.

In contrast to Ichio et al., the connector of claim 1 has “a bite-in portion formed integrally with the holder on an inner surface of the wire accommodating space.” Additionally, the claimed bite-in portion projects “sufficiently into the wire accommodating space for plastically deforming at least part of the wire by biting in a bent portion of the wire.” The connector of Ichio et al. is very effective for its intended purposes. However, the Ichio et al. reference is deficient in two respects as a 35 USC 102 reference for the claimed invention. Specifically, the structure of Ichio et al. that the Examiner compares to the claimed bite-in portion clearly is not and cannot be “formed integrally with the holder”. Furthermore, the structure of Ichio et al. that the Examiner compares to the claimed bite-in portion does not project “sufficiently into the wire accommodating space for plastically deforming at least part of the wire by biting in a bent portion of the wire.” In contrast, the Ichio et al. structure that the Examiner compares to the claimed bite-in portion must be formed from an entirely different type of material than the housing or cover of Ichio et al., and hence cannot be formed integrally with the holder. Furthermore, the jelly-like material cannot plastically deform at least part of the wire by biting in a bent portion of the wire, and to the contrary, the wire of Ichio et al. is specifically defined as deforming the jelly-like sealing material.

A section 102 rejection requires the reference to have each of the limitations recited in the claim. The Ichio et al. reference clearly does not have a bite-in portion formed integrally with the holder and clearly does not have a bite-in portion that plastically deforms at least part of the wire by biting in a bent portion of the wire. Hence, the Ichio et al. reference cannot be the basis for a section 102 rejection of claim 1. An obviousness rejection would require something in the reference or elsewhere to motivate the skilled artisan to revise the structure shown in the reference in a way that would lead from the reference to the claimed invention. The revisions that would be required to Ichio et al. would make Ichio et al. unsuitable for its clearly defined purposes. It is submitted that the person skilled in this art would not be motivated to revise Ichio et al. in a way that would make the reference unsuitable for its intended purposes. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 1-3 as previously amended are patentable over Ichio et al.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter, and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,


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